

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

SUBJECT: **CRITICAL CARE TRANSPORT (CCT) PROVIDER** REFERENCE NO. 414

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PURPOSE: To define the criteria to be approved as a Registered Nurse/Respiratory Specialty Care Transport CCT Provider in Los Angeles County.

AUTHORITY: Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Sections 1797.52, 1797.178, 1798.170 and 1798.172.  
Business and Professions Code, Section 3700-3706  
Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act of 2006  
Los Angeles County Code, Title 7. Chapter 7.16. Ambulances

PRINCIPLES:

1. A private ambulance company must be licensed by the County of Los Angeles as a basic life support (BLS) provider in order to be eligible for approval as a critical care transport provider.
2. A Basic Life Support (BLS) private ambulance provider agency may be approved to employ registered nurses (RNs) and/or respiratory care practitioners (RCPs) to staff and provide interfacility CCTs.
3. This policy does not apply when RNs and/or RCPs employed by a healthcare facility are utilized by an ALS or BLS provider agency to provide interfacility patient transport (i.e., emergent situations, specialized transport teams, etc.).
4. RCPs may be utilized to perform duties commensurate with their scope of practice; however, additional transport personnel (EMTs, RNs, physicians, or paramedics) must accompany the RCP based on the level of acuity and anticipated patient care requirements.

DEFINITIONS:


**Advanced Life Support (ALS) Transport:** A ground or air ambulance transport of a patient who requires or may require skills or treatment modalities that do not exceed the paramedic scope of practice. An ALS transport may be required for either a non-emergency or emergency transport.

**Basic Life Support (BLS) Transport:** A ground or air ambulance transport of a patient who requires skills or treatment modalities that do not exceed the Los Angeles County EMT scope of practice. A BLS transport may be sufficient to meet the needs of the patient requiring either non-emergency or emergency transport.

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SUPERSEDES: 07-28-11

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APPROVED:   
Director, EMS Agency

  
Medical Director, EMS Agency

**Nurse-Staffed CCT:** A ground or air ambulance interfacility transport of a patient who may require skills or treatment modalities that exceed the paramedic scope of practice but do not exceed the RN scope of practice. A nurse-staffed CCT may be required for either a non-emergency or emergency interfacility transport.

Physicians, RCPs, perfusionists or other personnel may be added to the nurse-staffed CCT team (minimum of one RN and two EMTs) as needed.

**Respiratory Care Practitioner Staffed CCT:** A ground or air ambulance interfacility transport of a patient who requires the skills or treatment modalities that exceed the Los Angeles County EMT scope of practice but does not exceed the RCP scope of practice. A RCP-staffed CCT may be required for either a non-emergency or emergency interfacility transport.

Physicians, perfusionists or other personnel may be added to the RCP CCT team (minimum of one RCP and two EMTs) as needed.

**POLICY:**

I. Eligibility Requirements

A BLS ambulance company licensed by Los Angeles County may be approved to utilize registered nurses and/or respiratory care practitioners to provide interfacility transports if the eligibility requirements outlined in this policy are met.

A. Transport Medical Director

1. Provider shall have a medical director who is currently licensed as a physician in the State of California, qualified by training and/or experience, current practice in acute critical care medicine (if overseeing RCPs, must be knowledgeable in respiratory care) and board certified or board eligible in their corresponding specialty.
2. The Medical Director of the EMS Agency must approve all Transport Medical Director candidates.
3. The Transport Medical Director shall:
  - a. Sign and approve, in advance, all medical protocols and CCT policies and procedures to be followed for nurse-staffed and/or RCP-staffed (as applicable) CCTs.
  - b. Oversee the ongoing training of all CCT medical personnel.
  - c. Be familiar with the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) requirements.
  - d. Attend the EMS Orientation Program within six months of employment as a Transport Medical Director.

- e.     Participate in the development, implementation, and ongoing evaluation of a quality improvement (QI) program.

B.     Transport Coordinator

- 1.     CCT Coordinator: Provider shall have a CCT Coordinator who is currently licensed in the State of California as a RN, has a minimum of one year experience in ambulance transports, and current practice in emergency medicine or critical care nursing.
- 2.     RCP Coordinator: Providers utilizing RCPs to staff CCTs shall have a RCP Coordinator who is currently licensed in the State of California as a RCP, has a minimum of one year experience in ambulance transports, and current practice in respiratory care.

**NOTE: For CCT providers who also perform nurse-staffed CCTs, the CCT Coordinator may function as the RCP Coordinator in conjunction with the Transport Medical Director; however, RCP Coordinator may NOT function as the CCT Coordinator.**

- 3.     The Transport Coordinator shall:
  - a.     Sign and approve, in advance, all policies and procedures to be followed for CCTs.
  - b.     Maintain documentation indicating that all medical personnel have been oriented to the RN/RCP-staffed CCT program.
  - c.     Maintain documentation of all applicable licensure, certification and/or accreditation requirements for all CCT medical personnel.
  - d.     Be familiar with EMTALA and HIPAA.
  - e.     Ensure the development, implementation and ongoing evaluation of a QI program in collaboration with the Transport Medical Director.
  - f.     Attend the EMS Agency Orientation Program within six months of employment as Transport Coordinator.
  - g.     Ensure the ongoing training and competency evaluation of all medical personnel.
  - h.     If involved in actual patient transports, meet all applicable requirements as outlined in Section I. C. below.

C.     Transport Personnel

- 1.     Two EMTs comprise the basic interfacility transport team; additional personnel (physicians, RNs, and/or RCPs) shall be added to the basic life

support team based on the acuity and anticipated needs of the patient during transport.

a. Staffing exceptions must be approved by the EMS Agency prior to utilization by the ambulance company.

2. RNs, RCPs and EMTs shall:

- a. Be currently licensed or certified for unrestricted practice in California.
- b. Be currently certified in healthcare provider level cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- c. Successfully complete a RN/RCP Staffed Interfacility CCT Program Orientation sponsored by the provider agency and approved by the EMS Agency.
- d. Successfully complete an annual skill competency evaluation conducted by the provider agency and approved by the EMS Agency.
- e. Be familiar with EMTALA and HIPAA.

3. In addition to the requirements listed in Section I. C. 2. a. – e. above, all transport RNs shall:

- a. Have a minimum of two years nursing experience in a critical care area within the previous 18 months prior to employment as a transport nurse.
- b. Be currently certified in Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) and, if participating in pediatric transports, currently certified in Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS).
- c. For full-time transport nurses, complete a total of 60 continuing education (CE) contact hours approved by the California Board of Registered Nursing (BRN) every two years. A minimum of 30 of these hours must be in an area relevant to their clinical setting and types of transports performed.
- d. For part-time (working less than 32 hours per week as a transport RN), complete 96 hours of documented critical care experience per year, or complete a total of 60 CE contact hours approved by the California BRN every two years. A minimum of 30 of these hours must be in an area relevant to their clinical setting and type of transports performed.
- e. Recommendation: Certified Emergency Nurse (CEN), Critical Care Registered Nurse (CCRN), and/or Mobile Intensive Care

Nurse (MICN).

4. In addition to the requirements listed in Section I. C. 2. above, all transport RCPs shall:
  - a. Have a minimum of two years respiratory care experience in an acute care or respiratory care hospital within 18 months prior to employment as a transport RCP.
  - b. Be current in ACLS and, if participating in pediatric transports, be current in PALS.
  - c. For full-time transport RCPs, complete 30 CE contact hours approved by the Respiratory Care Board of California. A minimum of 15 of these hours must be in an area relevant to their clinical setting and type of transports performed.
  - d. For part time transport RCPs (working less than 32 hours per week as a transport RCP, complete 96 hours of documented critical care experience per year or a total of 30 CE contact hours approved by the Respiratory Care Board of California. A minimum of 15 of these hours must be in an area relevant to their clinical setting and type of transports performed.

D. Policies and Procedures

Provider shall have a policy and procedure manual that includes, at a minimum, the following:

1. A description of the interfacility transport orientation program and process utilized to verify skill competency for registered nurses, EMTs, RCPs and, if applicable, other medical personnel.
2. A statement regarding whether malpractice insurance is provided by the employer or employee.
3. The identity of the Transport Medical Director, the CCT Coordinator, and, if applicable, the RCP Coordinator. The EMS Agency shall be notified in writing of any changes in these key personnel utilizing Reference No. 621.1, Notification of Personnel Changes.
4. A description of the procedure for contacting the Transport Medical Director, CCT Coordinator and RCP Coordinator if needed during a patient transport.
5. A description of the record retention procedures which meets the requirements listed in Reference No. 610, Retention of Prehospital Care Records.
6. A description of all interfacility transfer paperwork.

7. The sending physician's Statement of Responsibility for the patient during transfer in accordance with EMTALA.
8. A description of the procedures to be followed for changes in destination due to unforeseen changes in the patient's condition or other unexpected circumstances.
9. Current patient care protocols which have been approved by the Transport Medical Director.

E. Quality Improvement (QI) Program

1. The Provider Agency shall have a QI Program that meets the standards outlined in Reference No. 620 and 620.1.
2. Records of QI activities shall be maintained by the provider and available for review by the EMS Agency.

F. Required Equipment

1. Each transport vehicle shall include as minimum standard inventory all items required by Reference No. 710, Basic Life Support Ambulance Equipment.
2. Nurse staffed CCT vehicles shall also be equipped with the standardized inventory specified in Reference No. 712, Nurse Staffed Critical Care Inventory.
3. RCP staffed CCT vehicles shall also be equipped with the standardized inventory specified in Reference No. 713, Respiratory Care Practitioner (RCP) Staffed Critical Care Inventory.
4. In addition, each transport vehicle shall have equipment and supplies commensurate with the scope of practice of any additional transport medical personnel (e.g. balloon pump technicians, neonatal intensive care unit transport teams, etc.) staffing the CCT unit. This requirement may be fulfilled through the utilization of appropriate kits (cases/packs), which must be removed if the vehicle is being utilized for BLS transport purposes.
5. Biomedical equipment used for patient care must show evidence of ongoing maintenance and safety certification (e.g., service agreements, calibration logs, etc.).

II. Application Process and Program Review

Request for approval of a CCT program must be made in writing to the Director of the Los Angeles County EMS Agency and shall include the following:

- A.   Proposed identification and location of the CCT units.
- B.   Procedures and protocols as outlined in Section I. D. 1. – 9. above.
- C.   Documentation of qualifications of the proposed Transport Medical Director (resumé/curriculum vitae, copy of medical license and applicable board certification).
- D.   Documentation of qualifications of the proposed CCT Coordinator and, if applicable, the RCP Coordinator (resumé(s) or curriculum vitae, copy of current license(s) and certifications).
- E.   Copy of the current QI Plan (include specific indicators which will be utilized to monitor the CCT program) as outlined in Section I. E. 1. – 2. above.
- F.   Statement acknowledging agreement to comply with all policies and procedures of the EMS Agency, including immediate notification in writing of a change in Transport Medical Director, CCT Coordinator or RCP Coordinator (Reference No. 621.1).

**NOTE: The above information needed for approval of a new CCT program is due to the EMS Agency as a complete packet within 30 (thirty) days of receipt of letter from the EMS Agency acknowledging the request for approval. If a complete packet of information is not received within that 30 (thirty) day period the request is denied, a subsequent request for approval will not be accepted for 90 (ninety) days. This would result in the providers' inability to provide any CCT services until approved by the EMS Agency.**

III.   Program Review

- A.   The EMS Agency shall perform periodic on-site audits of transport records, QI processes, equipment/vehicle inspections and personnel qualifications to ensure compliance with this policy.
- B.   Non-compliance with this policy may cause the EMS Agency to suspend or revoke approval to provide interfacility CCTs.

CROSS REFERENCE:

Prehospital Care Manual:

- Ref. No. 414.1, **Verification of Employment Letter**
- Ref. No. 418, **Authorization and Classification of Prehospital EMS Aircraft**
- Ref. No. 517, **Provider Agency Transport/Response Guidelines**
- Ref. No. 620.1, **EMS Quality Improvement Program Guidelines**
- Ref. No. 710, **Basic Life Support Ambulance Equipment**
- Ref. No. 712, **Nurse Staffed Critical Care Unit Inventory**
- Ref. No. 713, **Respiratory Care Practitioner (RCP) Critical Care Unit Inventory**
- Ref. No. 802, **Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Scope of Practice**
- Ref. No. 803, **Los Angeles County Paramedic Scope of Practice**

Business and Professions Code:

- California Nursing Practice Act, Section 2725**
- California Respiratory Care Practice Act, Sections 3700 et al**